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SUPREME COURT OF KENTUCKY
JUSTICE MARTIN E. JOHNSTONE, RETIRED
6300 HUNTING HARBOR ROAD
PROSPECT, KENTUCKY 40059-9335

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March 3, 2009

**COPY OF LETTER SENT TO ALL CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT JUDGES IN THE
COMMONWEALTH – It was individually addressed to each judge.**


RE: Criminal Justice System Funding

Dear Judge Smith,

I am writing to ask that you help protect the integrity of the justice system and the safety of Kentucky's citizens by contacting your legislative representatives to alert them about the essential need for funding and resources to support the prosecution and defense of criminal cases in the Commonwealth. The ability of prosecutor and defender offices to provide their services through the rest of the fiscal year is in serious jeopardy. Revenue shortfalls mean that public defenders will run out of money sometime in early May, and prosecutors will run out by June. This situation must be immediately addressed to ensure the continued operation of the court system and the preservation of public safety. Otherwise, the judicial process is likely to come to a halt, resulting in a dangerous erosion of the rule of law, the credibility of our court system and the quality and reliability of the justice that it metes out.

Please contact your legislators as soon as possible and let them know that this is a real problem across the Commonwealth, and that the consequences of not properly addressing it and providing necessary funding for both prosecution and defense will be severe. It is not a partisan issue – it is a matter of justice and public safety. Personal calls from members of the judiciary will make a difference, perhaps a critical one, in convincing the legislature of the importance and urgency of this situation. Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,


Justice Martin E. Johnstone, Retired
Supreme Court of Kentucky

cc: Hon. Jason Nemes, Director, AOC
Hon. J. Michael Brown, Secretary, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet
Hon. Jack Conway, Attorney General
Hon. Ellen Heslen, Governor's General Counsel
Hon. Edward C. Monahan, Public Advocate